In case of lost baggages, scheduled domestic airlines also provide compensation to passengers as per company policy.

**Slashing of air-fares**

131. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India and Indian Airlines have lately slashed air-fares and freights following fall in prices of Aviation fuel; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Consequent to the reduction in fuel prices, NACIL has reduced fares on all major sectors ("X" Class) on the network effective 29.12.2008. With this reduction, fares in lower Instant Purchase (XFS) class have become cheaper by approx. 10% on the network.

Further, fuel surcharge which was levied to partly compensate the rising fuel expenses, has been reduced by Rs.400/- per coupon for all domestic sectors effective 01.12.2008. The current fuel surcharge collected from the passengers is Rs.1,950/- per coupon for distance upto 750 kms. and Rs.2,700/- for sectors with distances more than 750 Kms.

As regards air freight charges, the international air freight rate is a composite rate comprising of three components *viz.* (a) Basic airfreight rate; (b) Fuel Surcharge; (c) Security Surcharge.

While there has been no reduction in Basic airfreight rate and Security Surcharge, both on domestic and international sectors, the Fuel Surcharge was reduced by approx. 21% in February, 2009, except on perishable goods as the fuel surcharge on such goods is significantly lower than the general cargo.

**Membership fees of employee unions**

132. SHRI BHARATKUMAR RAUT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that employees of erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines have been demanding not to deduct money from their salary as membership fees for the union of which they are not members; and

(b) if so, by when the National Aviation Corporation of India Limited (NACIL) would stop these deductions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. Some of the employees in erstwhile Air India have requested the Management not to deduct the subscription fees to be paid to Aviation Industry Employees' Guild from their salary.

(b) The deductions have not been stopped as the genuineness of the requests of the employees have been questioned by the concerned Union and the status-quo would be maintained till a final verification/decision is taken in the matter.